When is Woman in Her Prime?

The Growing List of Women Who Marry Men Many Years Younger Than Themselves Seems to Show that Charms Are No Longer Certain to Wane Beyond Forty-Five and Even Fifty.

New York.—Is there ever a time in a woman's life when the possibility of romance is dead? Is her heart ever steeled to Cupid's shafts? What is a woman's prime of life, anyway? These are serious questions. They have been asked since the beginning of time; doubtless they will be asked to its end. But never has an answer been more frequently demanded than right now in this twentieth century. Practical as it is, these times are far from being shorn of romance.

In youth, in age, woman's power of loving seems always just the same. One day we have maidenly May marrying hoary-bearded December. Next we have mustached May the blushing bridegroom of motherly December. It is all the same—the only safe answer to the question is that there doesn't seem to be any woman in the world who can finally put aside romance for the more practical things of life.

And who could have given more prominence to this very thing than Miss Ellen Terry, premier Shakespearian actress of two continents. She has recently taken to herself a third husband—James Carew. They were married on March 22 last in Pittsburg by Justice of the Peace Campbell.

Terry's Youthful Husband.

The P[illegible]vania law requires certain questions. Young Mr. Carew said he was born in Indiana and was an actor by profession. He owned up to 32 years, but he looked younger. Miss Terry told that she had been married twice before—divorced once and widowed the second time. She gave her birthday as February 27, 1848.

Romance has always played a part in the life of Mrs. Charles T. Yerkes-Mizner. When as the beautiful Mary Adelaide Moore of Philadelphia she met Charles T. Yerkes he was not the multi-millionaire that he was when he died. He had been out of the penitentiary but a little while; still the golden-haired girl loved him and he loved her. They were married. Wealth came faster and faster.

Mr. Yerkes became one of the foremost traction men of this country and Europe. He had a beautiful Chicago home, but Mrs. Yerkes wanted another in New York. So the multi-millionaire built another one—a great brownstone pile in upper Fifth avenue.

He died on December 29, 1905. Within a month along came a handsome six-foot Californian, Wilson Mizner by name. He had a way with the women that was wonderful, and in the Golden West he had left a reputation as a lady's man which would be hard to duplicate.

He had known Mrs. Yerkes for about a year. He called to express his grief at her sorrow. Here again pity was akin to love. His sympathy was so apparently genuine, his solicitude so tender that the widow was touched very deeply.

Admits Mistake in Marriage.

Young Mr. Mizner himself felt the call of Cupid. From commiseration he turned to courtship; he won an easy victory after a whirlwind attack on the citadel of the widow's heart. Within a month after Mr. Yerkes' death they were quietly married.

But here the romance died a-borning. Mr. Mizner soon shook the dust of Fifth avenue from his feet, and Mrs. Yerkes-Mizner declared that it had all been a mistake.

But now the case of Mizner vs. Mizner is even before the court.

Death alone robbed Mrs. Frank Leslie of a fourth marriage. When the Marquis de Campallegre, a Spanish noble, died in Paris recently, Mrs. Leslie—that is the name by which she chooses to be known—told to her friends that she had promised to be his bride. Her trousseau had already been made in Paris, the wedding set for early this month.

But the marquis suddenly passed away. And now Mrs. Leslie has sailed for Europe to join the marquis' family.

Many Times Married.

Mrs. Leslie was the beautiful Miriam Florence Folline of New Orleans. Her first husband was E. G. Squier, afterward United States commissioner to Peru, from whom she separated. She then married Frank Leslie, the rich publisher. After his death she became a bride for the third time, marrying "Willie" Wilde, brother of the late Oscar Wilde. She divorced this husband because he was too much of a spendthrift, among other things.

Romance has always played a foremost role in the life of Patti, the divine. New York has known her these 50 years and more, but Europe has been the place where she has ever fallen prey to Cupid's darts.

The great diva was born in 1843, the morning after her mother. Mme. Barilli had sung Norma with great eclat. In 1851, Patti, at the tender age of eight, was also singing, but her real debut was in this city in 1859. Her singing made a furore; her success was instantaneous.

Seven years later she met the Marquis de Caux, of an honored French family. They were both in love and a marriage was arranged by no less a personage than the Empress Eugenie.

Won Heart of Diva.

Then in 1871 she met the tenor, Ernesto Nicolini. For Patti he changed the whole current of the diva's life. Signor Nicolini was a singer of no very remarkable ability. The great songstress loathed the man, who persisted in following her all over Europe, though there was a Signora Nicolini and several little Nicolinis.

But Nicolini was persistence itself. He was a friend of the Marquis de Caux, who found out one day how matters stood. He forbade the singer the house. This made the diva furious. He also refused to allow his wife to sing. This was the last straw. They separated; a divorce was finally obtained in 1884. The Nicolinis were made twain, too.

Then Patti and Nicolini were married. It was then Nicolini grew in the estimation of the world. He loved his new wife devotedly. He was the lover-like husband always.

And Patti loved him, too. When Nicolini fell ill of cancer of the tongue no one could nurse him but she. When he died she was inconsolable.

Then came the Baron Cederstrom, a young Swedish nobleman, 35 years old. They met at Pau, ten years ago. He fell heels over head in love with the woman with the wonderful voice. What care he—or she for that matter—about a little difference in age?

They were married, Craig-y-Nos was sold and the happy pair retired to a new castle in Norway, where they dwell yet, happy as larks.

Burdett-Coutts Romance.

Never was there a happier marriage than that of the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts and William Lehman Ashmead Bartlett, 37 years her junior, now styled Ashmead Burdett-Coutts. He was a Brooklyn boy of modest lineage and more modest fortune.

The baroness possessed a fortune of many millions of pounds sterling and was a partner in Coutts' bank, one of London't oldest financial institutions. She immediately settled an annuity of the interest on $1,250,000 upon the young Brooklynite. He in turn changed his name to Burdett-Coutts.

It was the happiest of marriages. The young husband was all devotion to his wife, who in turn was tremendously interested in his career. She made him almoner of all her vast schemes of charity; she advanced him in politics until he got a seat in parliament.

When she died, at 92, last December, her husband was grief-stricken.

Another international love match with London for its focus was that of Lady Randolph Churchill and young Lieut. Cornwallis West. But in this case the bride was the American, the bridegroom the British subject.

Churchill Won Prize.

Miss Jennie Jerome was one of the belles of New York 40 years ago. She was the daughter of Leonard Jerome, Wall street man, recanteur and bon vivant. Lord Randolph Churchill, one of England's foremost politicians made a trip to America and fell in love with the clever New York girl. Their marriage in Grace church was a notable event.

The pair returned to England. Lady Randolph's tact and cleverness had much to do with her husband's success in statecraft, as all England knew. Lord Randolph Churchill died in 1895, leaving his wife $250,000.

Four years later at Cowes Lady Randolph met young Lieutenant West, son of a family that had much pride but little money. It was love at first sight between the comely widow of 52 and the young officer of 25, younger than her youngest son.

The marriage of beautiful "Kitty" Dudley to Leslie Carter, millionaire, in 1880 proved unhappy. They were divorced in 1889, and the young ex-wife with the glorious Titian hair went on the stage, where she achieved not only fame but fortune.

Broadway is still talking about her marriage last summer while in Boston on an auto trip with a party of friends. It was all very sudden. Young Mr. Payne, only a trifle older than Mrs. Carter's son, Dudley, proposed one day; they were married almost the next.

Mrs. Burnett in the List.

Take Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, for example, author of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and other successful works for old and young. Mrs. Burnett was Miss Hodgson in 1873 when she married Dr. S. M. Burnett at the age of 23. A quarter of a century later they were divorced; two years afterward Mrs. Burnett, then a woman of 50, fell in love with Stephen Townsend, Englishman, physician, author and actor. They were married in 1900.

Then another literary romance had its culmination when that talented writer, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, married Herbert Ward. She was the gifted authoress, her genius matured at 44. He was the Andover theologue of 27, eager to enter the ministry.

Professor Phelps of the seminary, liked the enthusiastic youth, and he invited him to his house. There Mr. Ward met the authoress. He was fascinated by her brilliancy.

Gradually the young student's aspirations turned from the ministry to litature. Miss Phelps was his inspiration. What followed was—love. Their friends were amazed. They were married in October, 1888.

To-day Mrs. Ward is 62 years old and Mr. Ward is 45.

And in the news of only a day or two ago comes the announcement of two more such marriages. In Worcester, Mass., Mrs. Antoine Kielbasa, widowed three times, possessed of $1,000,000 and 46 years old, married Martin Moneta, ten years her junior and a poor photographer. Here in New York Mrs. Ada Jaffray McVickar announces her engagement to Herman P. Trappe. Mrs. McVickar has five sons, two of them married. Mr. Tappe is 30.

Who now shall dare to say what a woman's prime really is, or when she can forget romance and Cupid's call?

Evarts a Lover of Dogs.

Maxwell Evarts, son of former Senator William M. Evarts, is a big lawyer who lives in Vermont, practices law in New York and raises old English sheep dogs for fun. He has the best dogs of that breed in this country.

Has Risen to High Position.

Among the textile kings of New England is Walter H. Langshaw, of New Bedford, Mass. He rose rapidly from the humble position of barefooted bobbin boy to a man who now controls the most successful cotton mill in the world.

The New Owner

"Well," whispered Marion to me, "I guess it doesn't make any difference if we did have to wear silk gowns that you washed, turned, mended and made over. Guess what I just heard."

"What did you just hear?" I asked.

"Why," proceeded Marion, delightedly, "I was standing over by those ferns a minute ago, and just round the corner I heard Mrs. Lewis say to Claudie Brooks: 'I don't see how the Harcourt girls manage to dress so well,' and Claudia—spiteful old thing—said: 'I think they ought to be ashamed; everybody knows they can't afford it.' But just then that grand looking Mr. Maxwell came over to them, and it wasn't two minutes before I heard him ask who that striking girl with the red rose in her hair was. That was you, Eleanor. Now, aren't you flattered?"

"Dreadfully," I answered. "Anything more?"

"Yes, indeed," whispered Marion. "The best of it all was that he asked right away if you were one of the Harcourts who had owned the old place up town, and he asked her—Oh, look!"

Marion's volubility was checked at this point by the appearance of the already mentioned Mr. Maxwell with our two hostesses on his arm. He was a grave, handsome man, about 30, I thought, and after Mrs. Lewis had presented him he sat down beside me. He had talked about a good many things and had almost wearied of my monosyllabic replies, I fancy, when he finally brought up Harcourt, and I proceeded to astonish him by forgetting that we were strangers, and telling him the most ridiculous things with characteristic recklessness. I told him how we, Marion and I, went a round about way to avoid passing the dear old place, and how, when there was no way out of it, we went by with our heads turned away, because we loved it so. I told him we had been born there, and that every big room and every dingy panel brought up a memory that we loved. And it was not until Marion came for me to go home that I realized that he had listened to me silently for about an hour.

In the weeks following he came frequently and we met at several places. I got to thinking a good deal about him and to liking him very much. There was only one thing to dampen our pleasure. One day the news came to us that Mr. Griffin, who held a mortgage upon Harcourt, had sold it to strangers, and Marion and I told ourselves that from that time our claim upon it would be only that of any other outsiders, who might look at its dear old walls and pass it by. As I say, this darkened our lives a little, but there were still Mr. Maxwell's visits to look forward to, so it was worth while existing. But one evening when he called he said: "Miss Eleanor, I am going away to-morrow and I want you to do something for me. Will you?"

"I don't know," I answered in a low voice. Somehow I couldn't for the life of me manage anything else. But he didn't seem to notice that I said nothing about regretting his going away. He simply asked me if I would go down to Harcourt with him. I was too miserable to resist, and we went.

When we went up to the long hall above and found that some impatient person had removed our few remaining pieces of old furniture and had hung new paintings there over crimson hangings, I felt I couldn't stand any more. "What does this mean?" I cried.

"The purchaser hopes to live here," explained Mr. Maxwell, "and he is getting ready for occupancy."

Here, I suppose, the poor man was bewildered enough, for I had restrained myself as long as I could, and I rushed to the one place where the hated crimson did not cover the panels, laid my head against their friendly support and burst out crying.

"Oh, why did you bring me here?" I said. "I can't stand everything. I would rather have the old place burned to the ground, with only the poor old chimney left to show where it stood, than to see it fitted with the most beautiful things in the world by strangers. Everything I care about turns out wrong," I concluded, with a sign. "I am losing my home, and now you—"

"I stopped, frozen with horror. What had I said! But Norman Maxwell suddenly put me into the window seat and sat down beside me. "Eleanor, look at me," he said. But I absolutely couldn't lift my head, so he put his hand under my reluctant chin and turned my face toward him. "Eleanor," he went on, "don't you know I've loved you all the time and that I was going away with the heartache, confident that you did not care for me? Don't you care just a little more about me than for an ordinary friend?"

"Oh!" I exclaimed, very much afraid that my stupidity had forced him into it. "I shouldn't have said—I didn't mean to—" But he put his arms around me and then I knew it wasn't because of what I had said.

Well, I was so happy that I cried and laughed in my own ridiculous fashion, and when he went home Marion says it was difficult to tell which beamed the brightest, my eyes or my nose. But I think I have wept the last sorry tear I shall ever shed, for the best man in the world has bought Harcourt for me and it is to be our home when we are married.

SIZED HIM UP WRONG.

Fistic Encounter Did Not Turn Out as It Was Planned.

"It was this way, you see," said the young man with the black eye and skinned nose, and a gap in his mouth where two front teeth used to be. "I was elbowed by a feller on a street car and we had some words. I determined to lick that man or die. I could have hit him with a stone or club or hired some ruffian to waylay him, but I wanted to polish him off scientifically. I wanted to dally with him—to jab and uppercut him and straight punch until I made a pulp of him."

"And so you took boxing lessons?" was queried.

"That's what I did—24 of them. When I had finished my instructor said I could knock out any man twice my weight in America. I had kept an eye on the elbow man and when I got good and ready I threw myself in his way. He gave me the elbow again. I called him a ruffian and a coward and invited him to step off the car."

"And the bluffer didn't dare do it, of course?"

"But he did dare. Yes, sir, he got down lively. I squared off at him and let go with my right. It missed. Then I let go with my left. It missed. Then I swung on him. He wans't there. Then—then—"

"Then you caught him an awful wallop and killed him stone dead?"

"Not quite. Something came booming along and hit me over the face and I went down and awoke in an ambulance."

"But you had taken 24 lessons in boxing."

"I had, but as I afterward found out the other feller had taken 48."

"PLANT STONES" OF VALUE.

Germs That Are Occasionally Found in Certain Vegetable Growths.

Among the many strange things to be found in the Philippine islands are the so-called "plant stones" encountered now and again in certain vegetable growths.

The bamboo, for instance, according to Kultur and Natur, contains a stone very similar to the opal, but on account of the rarity with which it is found, much more costly than the opal.

In many thousand cane stalks cut down and carefully examined there may perhaps be one in which this beautiful greenish-pink scintillating stone has been formed from the minute particles of silicious deposit that imparts its intense hardness to the outer covering of the cane. The bamboo-cane stone is known as Tabashirs.

In the interior of some cocoanuts a stone-like secretion is found that is not inferior in brilliancy to the most beautiful genuine pearl.

The True Phonetic Speller.

The child is the true phonetic speller. Mr. Roosevelt, as Kipling might say, is a bloomin' amateur beside him—or her. Little Eslie had been staying in a quiet woodland place—the Cockney girlie was convalescent from a severe illness. Her letters home were full of the joys of country life, and reckless spelling. "The lanes and meddoes (she wrote to a girl friend in London) is crammed wiv luvly flours. I got bofe hands full. Bootiful Star Annie Moans, Prim Roses, Daiseys and Butter Cups and Jhon Quills—o my!" And the adult into whose hands the artless letter fell wondered if spelling were not a vastly over-rated accomplishment!

Palace Smoking Room.

A quite small chamber was the one room in all Windsor castle where the late queen permitted smoking.

A self-colored blue gray paper wa on the walls, and the single billiard table was lighted by six oil lamps until quite the last years of Queen Victoria's reign.

It was indeed a homely apartment, says the Throne, but if the walls could speak they could tell strange stories of emperors and kings, princes, commoners, ministers of state, poets, bishops and the endless procession of great and important people who passed an hour there to smoke a last cigar.

Her Father's Child.

A lawyer well known for his ready wit in adapting himself to circumstances and circumstances to his case has a young daughter who bids fair to be his match. Lucy was told she should have no more candy, and the dish was placed on a high shelf, out of the child's reach. Left alone in the room, Lucy pushed a chair to the shelf and climbed upon the chair. Just as she touched the dish her father entered.

"Why, what is papa's little girl doing?" he exclaimed.

"Getting a candy for papa," explained Lucy, promptly.—Lippincott's Magazine.

This Exception.

"I have come a long way to personally offer you some of my humorous stuff," said the seedy looking man as he proffered the manuscript.

"But my dear sir," snapped the editor, "we can't accept any far-fetched witticisms."—Kansas City Times.

The Same Species.

"Did you ship that load of elephants' ears to the florist on the suburban express?"

"No. I thought it would be more in order to send them on the trunk line."—Baltimore American.

THE SPRING SEWINGLUST

Every spring I go perfectly mad over sewing things," said The Widow, "and every summer finds me with my money all spent and nothing to wear."

"A la 'Flora McFlimsy, of Madison square?'" queried The Girl.

"No, I mean it literally," The Widow replied.

"You see, there used to be children," she continued, with a far away look in her eyes, "and always in the spring I made all their little dresses for the summer. And so, even yet, the longing to sew comes up in my soul every spring like a perennial in the garden.

"Just as soon as the shop people begin to fill their windows with pretty lawns and dimities, the madness begins. Of course, there aren't any babies any more for me to make things for, but just the same I can picture dainty gowns and can fancy myself arrayed in frocks so 'simple' that I know perfectly well I can make them myself for half what they would cost to have made.

"So, the first bright day that comes I go shopping; and I pretend to deliberate wisely over everything, while all the time I am intoxicated with the prospective joy of making clothes, and am merely trying to prolong my ecstasy.

"After a time I select a delicate pink lawn and a dress length of white dimity with blue corn flowers on it, and another with green leaves and stripes, and I get linen and pique and crash to make half a dozen dresses all white; and I buy yards and yards of lace and spools and spools of thread and lots of braid and many paper patterns, and a pair of new scissors; and I'm in such frantic haste to begin to sew that I carry half my bundles with me; and on my way home I rent a machine with all the 'attachments,' and tell the sewing machine people that it positively must be delivered immediately.

"For weeks I sew madly, with occasionally sprints over to Sixth avenue for more lace for this or more insertion for that; and every time some other piece of goods lures me, and I buy enough for another frock or a waist or something; and always the next day the balance of the same goods is advertised at a bargain sale and sold for a third less than I paid.

"After the machine is taken away, and all the scraps are thrown out and everything is once more in calm repose and the furniture is no longer disguised by frills and linings and paper patterns and things, there'll be a waist discovered with sleeves only light basted in; there'll be a skirt minus a waistband or with a hem [illegible]ding unstitched; and something will be too short and something else will be too long; and the things made from patterns that did not 'allow for seams' will be big enough for the 'fat lady' at Coney, and those that did 'allow for seams' will be too small for any normal woman that weighs a hundred and forty pounds—meaning yourself.

"Well, every year it ends the same way—by the time the fever to sew has left my money is all spent, and there isn't a single thing that I can wear and maintain my self-respect. The maid gets some, the laundress gets the rest, and I get through the summer somehow, with one or two cheap ready-made gowns, bought as a makeshift, and not a single pretty, dainty frock to my name.

"Every summer I declare I'll never do it again, but every spring that same madness for sewing grips my vitals, and it's the same ridiculous spree all over again.

"I've conceived a plan though for this year—I'm going to make dear, cute little baby things—they won't be nearly so expensive, and I can send them to the children's home or hospital or something."

The next time The Girl found The Widow she was sitting amid heaps of snowy lawn and reels of lace edging, and the "pattern" was a tiny little frock, all yellow from age, and torn as by a child at play.

But The Widow did not sew—she buried her face in the wee garment and sobbed.

And the spell of the sewinglust was broken.

Women as Floorwalkers.

Women are fast replacing men as shop-walkers in millinery and dress shops, says the London Daily Mail. In the large and fashionable West End drapers' establishments the tall, imposing, frock coated man still reigns supreme as shop sentry, but in the smaller shops all over London the woman "walker" is rapidly gaining ground.

It costs much less to employ feminine shop-walkers, and it is said that a woman establishes more friendly and confidential relations with the customers than is possible in the case of a man. By reason of this intimacy she can offer very valuable advice to proprietors as to the class of goods which are popular with the customers.

Hardness of Tantalum.

Tantalum has been hammered into sheets which are extremely hard.

Sir William Crookes, F. R. S., states that "a hole had to be bored through a plate of this metal and a diamond drill was used, revolving at the rate of 5,000 revolutions per minute. This whirling force was continued ceaselessly for three days and nights, when it was found that only a small depression 0.25 millimeter deep had been drilled, and it was a moot point which had suffered the more damage—the diamond or the tantalum."—Scientific American.